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The Social Principle among a People, and
its Bearing on their Progress and
Development.

A Discourse,

DELIVERED ON

THANKSGIVING DAY

November 25, 1875,

IN

Saint Mary's Chapel,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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By Alex. Crummell, Rector.

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PREFATORY REMARKS.

THIS discourse was prepared and delivered with not the remotest idea of its publication; but so frequent and so earnest have been the requests for its appearance in print that, after several refusals, I have felt that it would seem rude to continue to withhold it. It is printed as it was preached; save that, on two or three points, I have felt myself obliged and warranted in enlarging to cover the crudity and abruptness of extreme brevity, and to give more clearness and distinctness to special points. The reader therefore will find three or four pages more of matter than fell upon the ears of my congregation.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *Jan.* 14, 1876.

A. C.

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.

Isaiah xli., 6, 7.

They helped every one his neighbor, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails that it should not be moved.

MORE than a month has passed away since we received the proclamation of the Chief Magistrate of this nation, appointing the 25th of November a day of public thanksgiving to Almighty God.

And, in accordance with this pious custom, we, in common with millions of our fellow-citizens throughout the republic, have met together this morning, to offer up our tribute of praise and thankfulness to our common Parent in heaven, for all the gifts, favors, blessings and benefactions; civil, domestic, religious, and educational, which have been bestowed upon us during the year:—for the blessings of heaven above; for the precious fruits brought forth by

the sun ; for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof ; for the golden harvests of peace, unstained by blood, and unbroken by strife ; for the constant stream of health which has flowed through our veins and households, untainted by plagues or pestilence ; for the babes whom the Lord has laid upon your arms and given to your hearts ; for the plentiful supply of food which has been granted us from the fields, and which has laden our boards ; for the goodly instruction which trains the mind and corrects the hearts of our children, and prepares them for responsibility, for duty and, eternity ; for the civil privileges and the national freedom, in which we are permitted to participate ; for the measure of success which God has given His Gospel, and for the hope that is ours that the Cross shall yet conquer everywhere beneath the sun, and that Jesus shall rule and reign through all the world. For these and all other gifts and blessings we render our tribute of praise and gratitude to the Lord, our maker, preserver and benefactor, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord !

Grateful as is this theme of gratitude, and inviting as it is for thought and further expression, it is not my purpose to pursue it to-day. I feel that we should turn the occasion into an opportunity for improvement and progress. Indeed all the gifts and benefactions of the Almighty are, and are designed to be, so many agencies and incentives for man to rise to higher degrees, and loftier positions of growth, of expansion, and of principle. We have been blessed during the year in many various and signal ways. But the end which God has had in view, in our blessings, has been, that we might secure a propulsive power, in and by His blessings, to carry us on to a nobler manhood, and a superior plane of being. And hence, while it is indeed well for us, ever and anon, and especially on an occasion like the present, to sit down and count over our mercies, it is equally well to ponder and reflect upon the *end* for which these blessings have been given us ;

and to study out the means by which we can use our mercies aright; and cause our talents to bring forth abundantly for human good and the Divine glory.

More especially is this the duty of a people situated as we are in this country; cut loose, blessed be God, for evermore, from the dark moorings of servitude and oppression; but not fully arrived at—only drifting towards the deep, quiet waters of fullest freedom and equality. Few, comparatively, in numbers; limited in resources; the inheritors of prodigious disasters; the heirs of ancestral woes and sorrows; burdened with most manifest duties and destinies; anxious for our children; thoughtful for our race; culpability and guilt of the deepest dye will be ours, if we do not most seriously consider the means and instruments by which we shall be enabled to go forward, and to rise upward. It is peculiarly a duty at this time when there is evidently an ebb-tide of indifference in the country, with regard to our race; and when the anxiety for union, neutralizes the interest in the black man.

The agencies to the high ends I have referred to are various; but the text I have chosen, suggests a train of thought, in a distinct and peculiar line. It gives us an insight into that spirit of unity which the world exhibits, when it would fain accomplish its great, commanding ends.

The prophet shews us here the notable sight, that is, that God comes down from heaven to put an end to the devices of the wicked. But immediately they join together to carry out their plans and purposes. Whatever discord and strife may have before existed among them, at once it comes to an end. A common danger awaits them; a common peril menaces. At once they join hands; immediately their hearts are united. "They helped every one his neighbor, and every one said to his neighbor, be of good courage."

The lesson is one which we will do well to learn with diligence; that it comes from the wicked, does not detract from its value. The world acts on many

a principle which Christians would do well to lay to heart. Our Saviour Himself tells us that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." So here, this principle of united effort, and of generous concord, is worthy of the imitation of the colored people of this country, if they would fain rise to superiority of both character and achievement. This subject, it strikes me, may properly serve as a theme for remark and consideration to-day. I shall speak therefore of the "*Social principle among a people; and its bearing on their progress and development.*"

What I mean by the social principle, is the disposition which leads men to associate and join together for specific purposes; the principle which makes families and societies, and which binds men in unity and brotherhood, in races and Churches and nations.

For man, you will observe, *is* a social being. In his mental and moral constitution God has planted certain sympathies and affections, from which spring the desire for companionship. It is with reference to these principles that God declared of the single and solitary Adam, "It is not good for the man to live alone." It was no newly discovered affinity, of the Maker. Nor was it any afterthought of the Almighty. He had *formed* His creature with a fitness and proclivity for association. He had made him with a nature that demanded society. And from this principle flows, as from a fountain, the loves, friendships, families and combinations which tie men together, in union and concord. A wider and more imposing result of this principle, is the welding of men in races and nationalities. All the fruit and flowers of these organisms come from the coalescence of divers faculties and powers, tending to specific ends. For no one man can effect anything important alone. There never was a great building, a magnificent city, a noble temple, a grand cathedral, a stately senate house which was the work of one sin-

gle individual. We know of no important event in history, no imposing scheme, no great and notable occurrence which stands as an epoch in the annals of the race, which was accomplished by a single, isolated individual. Whether it is the upbuilding of Imperial Rome; or the retreat of the ten thousand; or the discovery of America; or Cook's or Anson's voyage around the globe; or the conquest of India; or the battle of Waterloo; everywhere we find that the great things of history have been accomplished by the combinations of men.

Not less is this the case in those more humane and genial endeavors which have been for the moral good of men, and wherein the individuality of eminent leaders has been more conspicuous. We read of the evangelization of Europe from the confines of Asia to Britain; and, in more modern times, we have the abolition of the slave trade and slavery; the grand efforts for the relief of prisoners, the temperance reformation, the Sunday school system. These were noble schemes, which originated in the fruitful brains and sprung from the generous hearts of single individuals, and which, in their gracious results, have made the names of Howard and Wilberforce, of Clarkson and Robert Raikes, bright and conspicuous. But yet we know that even they of themselves, did not achieve the victories which are associated with their names. Thousands, nay, ten thousands of the good and pious were aroused by their passionate appeals to stirring energy; and only when the masses of the godly were marshalled to earnest warfare, were those evils doomed; and they fell never to rise again!

I need not multiply these illustrations. They serve clearly enough to show that in the accomplishment of great purposes, the united agency of numerous hearts, heads and hands, are necessary to secure success.

The application of this truth to the interests and the destiny of the colored race of America is mani-

fest. We are living in this country, a part of the population of the country; and yet, in divers respects, we are as foreign to its inhabitants, as though we were living in the Sandwich Islands. It is this actual separation of us from the real life of the nation, which constitutes us "a nation within a nation:" thrown very considerably upon ourselves for many of the largest interests of life, and for nearly all our social and religious advantages. As a consequence on this state of things, all the stimulants of ambition and self-love should lead this people to united effort for personal superiority and the uplifting of the race; but, instead thereof, overshadowed by a more powerful race of people; wanting in the cohesion which comes from racial enthusiasm; lacking in the confidence, which is the root of a people's stability; disintegration, unfaith, distrust, and suspiciousness almost universally prevail, and distract all their business and policies. Among a people, as in a nation, we find farmers, mechanics, sailors, servants, business men, trades.

For life, energy and progress, in a people, it is necessary that all these various departments of activity should be carried on with spirit, skill and unity. It is the co-operative principle, working in trades, businesses and manufacturing, which is the great lever which is lifting up the million masses in great nations; and giving those nations themselves, a more masterly superiority than they have ever known, in all their past histories. No people can discard this principle, and achieve greatness. Already I have shown that it cannot be done in the confined sphere of individual personal effort. The social principle prevails in the uprearing of a nation, as in the establishing of a family. Men must associate and combine energies in order to produce large results. In the same way that a family becomes strong, influential and wealthy, by uniting the energies of parents and children, so a people go on to honour and glory, in the proportion and extent that they

combine their powers to definite and productive ends.

Doubtless you will have noticed *two* principles which come out of the remarks I have made, that is, the *one* of mutuality and the *other* of dependence.

By *mutuality* I mean the reciprocal tendencies and desires which interact between large bodies of men, aiming at single and definite ends. I mean the several sentiments of sympathy, cheer, encouragement and combination, among any special body of people; which are needed and required in distinct departments of labour. Solitude, in any matter, is alien to the human heart. We need, we call for the aid of our fellow-creatures. The beating heart of man waits for the answering heart of his brother.

It is the courageous voice of the venturesome soldier that leads on a whole column to the heart of the fray. It is the cheering song of the hardy sailor as he hangs upon the shrouds, amid the fierceness of the tempest, that lifts up the heart of his timid messmates, and stimulates to boldness and noble daring. On the broad fields of labor, where the scythe, the plough, and the spade work out those wondrous transformations, which change the wild face of nature to order and beauty, and in the end, bring forth those mighty cargoes of grain which gladden the hearts, and sustain the frames of millions; there the anthems of toil invigorate the brawny arms of labor; while the sun pours down its fiery rays, and the mid-day heat allures in vain, to the shade and to rest. Deep down in the dark caves of earth where the light of the sun never enters, tens of thousands of men and children delve away in the coal beds, or iron fields, deep buried in the bowels of the earth; cheered on in their sweatful labor, by the joyous voices, and the gladdening songs of their companions. What is it, in these several cases, that serves at once to lighten toil, and to stimulate to harder effort? Several principles indeed concur; but it is evident that what I call mutuality, *i. e.* sympa-

thy and unison of feeling, act upon the hearts of soldiers, sailors, laborers and miners, and spur them on to duty and endurance.

So likewise, we may not pass by the other motive, *i. e.* the feeling of *dependence*. We need the skill, the energy, the achievement of our fellow-creatures. We are dependent upon the effort and industry of man. No man stands up entirely alone; self-sufficient in the entire circle of human needs. Even in a state of barbarism the rude native man feels the need of the right arm of his brother. How much more with those who are civilized and enlightened? If you or I determine upon absolute independency of life and action, rejecting the arm and the aid of all other men, into how many departments of labors would we not, at once, have to multiply ourselves? Immediately we would have to assume the labour of all the different trades which supply us with garments, hats, shoes, books, paper and all other articles we need and use for our persons and our lives; and we should have to retire into solitude, and cut off from ourselves the speech, the converse and the commerce of our fellow-creatures. For all contact with men implies dependence, on the one hand, and the contribution of divers perceptible and imperceptible gifts from them, on the other.

It is the recognition of this principle of association, and of the underlying facts of reciprocity, which has made Great Britain, France, United States, Holland and Belgium, the greatest nations of the earth. There are more partnerships, combinations, trade-unions, banking-houses and insurance companies in those countries, than in all the rest of the world together. And see the effect of the same. The mere handful of men in these nations, numbering but one hundred millions, sway and dominate all the other nine hundred millions of men on the globe. Or just look at one single instance in our own day: here are England and France—fifty-eight millions of men, who united, only a few years ago, humbled the vast

empire of China, with its three hundred millions of semi-civilized inhabitants! This, perhaps, is the grandest illustration in history of the results of combined power.

The principles of growth and mastery in a race, a nation, or people, are the same all over the globe. The same great agencies which are needed to make a people in one quarter of the globe, and in one period of time, are needed here, at this time, in this American nationality. We must not think for a moment, that we children of Africa in this land, are different from any other people in these respects. Many of the differences of races are slight and incidental, and oft-times become obliterated by circumstances, position, and religion. I can take you back to a period in the history of England when its rude inhabitants lived in inferior huts; when they fed on barks and roots; when their dress was the skins of animals. When you next look at some eminent Englishman, the personification, perchance of everything cultivated, graceful and refined, you may remember that his distant ancestors were wild and bloody savages, and that it has taken ten centuries to change him from the rudeness of his brutalized forefathers, into an enlightened and civilized human being.

The great general laws of growth and superiority are unchangeable. The Almighty neither relaxes nor alters them for the convenience of any people. Conformity then, to this demand for combination of forces; compliance with the law of unity and co-operation is a necessity which we, as a people, cannot resist without loss and ruin. We can not pay heed to it too soon. For if there has been anything for which the colored people of this country have been, and now are noted; it is for disseverance, the segregation of their forces; the lack of the co-operative spirit. Neither in farming operations, nor trades, nor business, nor in mechanical employment, nor marketing, nor in attempts at grocery-keeping, do

we find attempts at combination of their forces. No one hears anywhere of a company of fifty men to start a farm, to manufacture bricks, or to commence a great trading business, or to run a mill, or to ply a set of vessels in the coasting trade. No one sees a spontaneous movement of thirty or forty families to take possession of a tract of land for a specific monetary venture. Nowhere do we see a united movement in any state for general and moral and educational improvement; whereby the masses may be delivered from inferiority and degradation.* The people, as a body, seem delivered over to the same humble, servile occupations of life in which their fathers trod; because, from a lack of co-operation, they are unable to step into the higher callings of business: and hence penury, poverty, inferiority and dependence, and even servility is their one general characteristic throughout the country, and a dreadful state of mortality.

And the cause of this inferiority of purpose and of action, is two-fold; and both the fault, to some extent of unwise and unphilosophic leaders. For since, especially emancipation *two* special heresies have influenced and governed the minds of colored men in this nation. (1.) The one is the dogma which I have heard frequently from the lips of leaders, personal and dear, but mistaken friends, *that the colored people of this country should forget as soon as possible, that they ARE colored people*: a fact, in the first place, which is an impossibility. Forget it forsooth when you enter a saloon and are repulsed on account of your color! Forget it when you enter a car, South or West, and are denied a decent seat! Forget it when you enter the Church of God and are driven to a hole in the gallery! Forget it when

*I am advised by an intelligent friend, that the above allegations need modification; that some few such organizations have been made in two or three of the Southern States, and in the City of Baltimore. The "COLORED EDUCATIONAL CONVENTION" of Virginia, deserves distinguished consideration and great commendation.

every child of yours would be driven ignominiously from four-fifths of the common schools of the country! Forget it, when thousands of mechanics, in the large cities, would make a "strike," rather than work at the same bench, in the same yard, with a black carpenter or a brick-maker! Forget it when the boyhood of our race is almost universally deprived of the opportunity of learning trades, through prejudice! Forget it, when, in one single State, 20,000 men dare not go to the polls on election day, through the tyranny of caste! Forget it, when one great commonwealth offers a new constitution for adoption; by which a man like *Dumas* the younger, if he were a North Carolinian, could be indicted for marrying the foulest white woman in that State; and merely because she was white! Forget that you are colored, in these United States! Turn madman, and go into a lunatic asylum; and then, perchance, you may forget it! But, if you have any sense or sensibility, how is it possible for you, or me, or any other colored man to live oblivious of a fact of so much significance, in a land like this! The only place I know of in this land, where you can "forget you are colored" is the grave!

But not only is this dogma folly, it is disintegrating, and socially destructive. For, shut out, for instance, as I am and you are, from the cultivated social life of the superior classes of this country; if I forget that I am a black man, if you ignore the fact of race, and we both ostrich-like stick our heads in the sand, or stalk along, high-headed, oblivious of the actual distinctions which *do* exist in American society; what are you, or I to do for our social nature? What will become of the measure of social life among ourselves, which we now possess? Where are we to find our friends? Where shall we seek our intimates? Where find the circles for society and cheerful intercourse?

Why, my friends, the only way you, and I, and tens of thousands of our people, get domestic relations;

marry wives and husbands ; secure social relations ; form good neighborhood and companionship is, by the very remembrance which we are told to scout and forswear.

2. The other dogma is the demand *that colored men should give up all distinctive effort, as colored men, in schools, churches, associations and friendly societies*. But this, you will observe, is equivalent to a demand, to the race, to give up all civilization in this land, and to submit to barbarism. The cry is—"give up your special organization." "Mix in with your white fellow citizens !" Now I waive, for the present, all discussion of abstract questions of rights and prerogatives.

I direct my attention to the simple point of practicality ; and I beg to say, that this is a thing which cannot be forced. Grieved, and wearied, and worried as humanity has been, with the absurd, factitious arrangements of society, in every quarter of the globe : yet men everywhere, have had to wait. You can batter down oppression and tyranny with forceful implements : not so, social disabilities, and the exclusiveness of caste. The Saxon could not force it upon the Norman. Upon this point, if everything is not voluntary, generous, gracious, and spontaneous ; the repulsive will is as icy, and, as obstinate too as Mt. Blanc. The wonder to me is that the men who talk in the style I have referred to, should forget that nine-tenths of the American people have become so poisoned and stimulated by the noxious influence of caste that, in the present day, they would resist to the utmost, before they would allow the affiliations, however remote, that implied the social or domestic principle.

Nay, more than this : not only would they reject your advances ; but, after they had repelled you, they would leave you to reap the fruits of your own folly in breaking up your own distinctive and productive organisms ; under the flighty stimulants of imaginative conceit.

And the disaster, I say, to you, would be deserved; not, indeed, morally, for the inflictions of caste are unjust and cruel; but because of your unwisdom; for it is the office of common sense to see, as well the exact situation, to comprehend the real condition of things as they exist in this nation; as well as to take cognizance of the pernicious and atrocious virulence of caste!

Few things in policy are more calamitous in result than mere conceit. An unbalanced and blind imagination is one of the most destructive, most disastrous of all guides. Such I believe to be the nature of the suggestions, which I reprobate. But remember I don't condemn the men who hold them.—Oppression and caste are responsible for many worse things than unwisdom, or blind speculation. How intolerable are the distinctions which hedge up our ardent, ambitious minds, on every side, I thoroughly apprehend! How the excited mind turns passionately to every fancied and plausible mode of escape, I can easily understand! But remember that the pilotage of a whole people, of an entire race, through the quicksands and the breakers of civil and social degradation, up to the plane of manly freedom and equality, while it is, by its very hazards, calculated to heighten the pulse, and to quicken the activity of the brain, is nevertheless, just that sort of work which calls for the coolest head, and the hardest, most downright reasonableness. When you are pleading for natural rights, when men are endeavoring to throw off the yoke of oppression, you may indeed

—“imitate the action of the tiger
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood.”

But a war against a gross public sentiment, a contest with prejudices and repulsions is a thing of a different kind, and calls for a warfare of an opposite character. You cannot destroy caste with a ten pounder. You cannot sweep away a prejudice with a park of artillery!

I know, to use the words of another, “how difficult it is to silence imagination enough to make the

voice of Reason even distinctly heard in this case; as we are accustomed from our youth up to indulge that forward and delusive faculty ever obtruding beyond its sphere; of some assistance indeed to apprehension, but the author of all error; as we plainly lose ourselves in gross and crude conception of things, taking for granted that we are acquainted with what indeed we are wholly ignorant of;"* so it seems to me the gravest of all duties, to get rid of all delusions upon this subject; and to learn to look at it in the light of hard, serious, long-continued, painful, plodding work. It is *work*, you will observe, not abnormal disturbances, not excitement; but a mighty effort of moral and mental re-construction, reaching over to a majestic end. And then when that is reached and secured, then all the hindrances of caste will be forever broken down!

The day will come when the gross distinctions of race will be obliterated in this country. Nothing is more idle than to talk of the invincibility of prejudice. The Gospel is sure to work out all the issues and results of brotherhood, everywhere under the sun, and in this land: but, until that day arrives, we are a nation, set apart, in this country. As such a nation we have got to strive—not to get rid of ourselves; not to agonize over our distinctive peculiarities; but to accept the situation as Providence allows it, and to quit "ourselves as men," in, if you say so, in painful and embarrassing circumstances; determined to shift the groove of circumstances, and to reverse them.

The special duty before us is to strive for footing in this land and for superiority, *on the line of race*, as a temporary, but needed expedient, for the ultimate extinction of caste, and all race distinctions. For if *we* do not look after our own interests, as a people, and strive for advantage, no other people will. It is folly for mere idealists to content themselves with the notion that, "we are American citi-

*Bishop Butler.

zens;" that, as "American citizens, ours is the common heritage and destiny of the nation;" that "special solicitude for the colored people is a superfluity;" that "there is but one tide in this land; and we shall flow with all others on it."

On the contrary, I assert, we are just now a "peculiar people" in this land; looked at, repulsed, kept apart, legislated for, criticised in journals, magazines and scientific societies, at an insulting and intolerable distance, *as a peculiar people*; with the doubt against us whether or not we can hold on to vital power on this soil; or whether we have capacity to rise to manhood and superiority.

And hence I maintain that there is the greatest need for us all to hold on to the remembrance that *we* are "colored men," and not to forget it!

While one remnant of disadvantage abides in this land, stand by one another! While proscription in any quarter exists, maintain intact all your phalanxes! While antagonism confronts your foremost men, hold on to all the instincts of race for the support of your leaders, and the elevation of your people! While the imputation of inferiority, justly or unjustly, is cast upon you, combine for all the elements of culture, wealth and power! While any sensitiveness or repulsion discovers itself at your approach or presence, hold on to your own self-respect, keep up, *and be satisfied with*, your own distinctive circles!

And then the "poor, forsaken ones," in the lanes and alleys and cellars of the great cities; in remote villages and hamlets; on old plantations which their fathers' blood has moistened from generation to generation; ignorant, unkempt, dirty, animal-like, repulsive, and half heathen—brutal and degraded; in some states, tens and hundreds of thousands, not slaves indeed, according to the letter of the law, but the tools and *serfs* of would be-oppressors:—stand by **THEM** until the school-master and preacher reaches them as well as us; and the noble Christian civilization

of the land transforms their features and their forms ; and changes their rude huts into homes of beauty ; and lifts them up unto such grand superiority, that no one in the land will associate the word " negro " with inferiority and degradation ; but the whole land, yea, the whole world shall look upon them by and by, multitudinous in their brooding, clustered masses, " redeemed, regenerated, disenthralled," and exclaim—" Black, but comely !" But, while they are low, degraded, miserable, almost beastly ; don't forget that you are colored men, as well as they ; " your brothers' keepers."

Do not blink at the charge of inferiority. It is not a race peculiarity ; and whatever its measure or extent in this country, it has been forced upon you. Do not deny it, but neutralize it and destroy it, not by shrieks, or agonies or foolish pretence ; but by culture, by probity and industry.

I know the natural recourse of some minds, under these painful circumstances, to cry out, agitate ! agitate ! But *cui bono* ? What advantage will agitation bring ? Everything has a value, according to its relation to its own natural and specific end. But what is the bearing of agitation to a purpose, which is almost entirely SUBJECTIVE in its nature. For, as I take it, the object, we must needs have in view, in the face of the disabilities which confront our race in this land, is the attainment of such general superiority, that prejudice *must* decline. But agitation has no such force, possesses no such value. Agitation is the expenditure of force : our end and aim is the husbandry of all our vital resources.

Character, my friends, is the grand, effective instrument which we are to use for the destruction of caste :—CHARACTER, in its broad, wide, deep and high significance ; character, as evidenced in high moral and intellectual attainments, as significant of general probity, honor, honesty and self-restraint ; as inclusive of inward might and power ; as comprehending the attainments of culture, refinement, and

enlightenment; as comprising the substantial results of thrift, economy and enterprise; and as involving the forces of combined energies and enlightened co-operation. Make this, *not* the exceptional, but the common, general reality, amid the divers, wide-spread populations of the colored people in this country; and then all the theories of inferiority, all the assumptions of your native and invincible degradation will pass, with wonderful rapidity, into endless forgetfulness; and the people of the very *next*, nay multitudes, in the decline of *this* generation, when they look upon us, will wonder at the degrading facts of a past and wretched history. Only secure high commanding and masterly CHARACTER; and then all the problems of caste, all the enigmas of prejudice, all unreasonable and all unreasoning repulsion, will be settled for ever, though you were ten times blacker than midnight. Then all false ideas concerning your nature and your qualities; all absurd notions relative to your capacity, shall vanish! Then every contemptuous fling shall be hushed, every insulting epithet be forgotten! Then also all the remembrances of a servile heritage, of ancestral degradation, shall be obliterated. Then all repulsive feelings, all evil dislikes shall fly away! Then too all timid disconcert shall depart from us, and all cramped and hesitant manhood, shall die!

Dear brethren and friends, let there be but the clear demonstration of manly power and grand capacity in our race, in general, in this country; let there only be the wide out-flashings of art and genius, from their brains; and caste will slink, at once, oblivious to the shades. But no mere self-assertion, no strong, vociferous claims and clamor, can ever secure recognition and equality; so long as inferiority and degradation, if even cruelly entailed, abide, as a heritage and a cancer. And I maintain we must *organize*, to the end that we may attain such character. The whole of our future, on this soil depends upon that single fact of magnitude

—CHARACTER. Race, color, and all the accidents thereof have but little to do with the matter; and men talk idly when they say "we must forget that we are colored men." What is needed in this land is not that *we* should forget this fact, but that we should rise to such elevation that the *people of the land* be forced to forget all the facts and theories of race, when they behold our thorough equality with them, in all the lines of activity and attainment, of culture and moral grandeur. The great thing needed in this land is, that its *white* population should forget, be made to forget, that we are *colored* men! Hence there is a work ahead for us, for the overthrow of caste, which will consume the best part of a century. He, whoever he may be, commits the greatest blunder, who advises you to disband your forces, until that work is brought to its end. It was only *after* the battle of Waterloo that England and her allies broke up their armies, and scattered their huge battalions. Not until we, as a people, have fully vindicated our race; not until we have achieved to the full their rights and prerogatives; not until, by character, we challenge universal respect and consideration in the land, can we sing the song:

—"Come to the sunset tree,
The day is past and gone,
The woodman's axe lies free,
And the Reaper's work is done.

Until that time, far distant from to-day, should the cry be everywhere among us: "Combine and marshal, for all the highest achievements in industry, social progress, literature and religion!"

The subject I have been discussing to-day is so large a one, that I feel I must have almost exhausted your patience. I hasten, therefore, to conclude with two brief remarks:

First. Then let me remind and warn you, my friends, that we, as colored men, have no superfluity of powers or faculties, in the work which is before

us, as a race, in this country. First of all we all start with maimed and stunted powers. And next, the work before us is so distinct, definite, and withal, so immense, that it tolerates no erratic wanderings to out-of-the-way and foreign fields.

And yet there are men among us who seem to think, and teach, too, that much of our work of the day is objective ; that it lies among another people. But I beg to say that we have more than we are equal to, in the needs of the five millions of our ignorant and benighted people, yet crippled and paralyzed by the lingering maladies of slavery. If we address ourselves strenuously and unitedly to their elevation, and improvement, we shall have our hands full, for more than one generation ; without flowing over with zeal and offices to a masterful people, laden with the enlightenment of centuries.

For one I say very candidly that I do not feel it my special calling to wage war with, and to extirpate caste. I am no way responsible for its existence. I abominate it as an enormity. *Theirs* is the responsibility who uphold it ; and theirs is the obligation to destroy it. My work is special to my own people, and it is constructive. I beg leave to differ from that class of colored men who think that ours is a special mission, to leave our camp, and to go over, as it were, among the Philistines, and to destroy their idols.

If they have such a mission, then, while they are working outside of our posts and encampments, they neglect duties which lie inside thereof.

For my part I am satisfied that my field of labour is with my own race, in these times. So great moreover, are the demands for effort and for men, that I feel I have no exuberance of powers or ability to spend in any other field ; or to bestow upon any other people. I say, as said the Shunamite woman, "I DWELL AMONG MY OWN PEOPLE."—(2 Kings, 4 : 13) not, indeed as mindless of the brotherhood of the entire species ; not as forgetful of the sentiment of fel-

lowship with disciples of every name and blood ; but, as urged by the feeling of kinship to bind myself as "with hooks of steel" to the most degraded class in the land, my own "kinsmen according to the flesh." I have the most thorough and radical conviction that the very first duty of colored men, in this our day and generation, is in the large field of effort which requires the regeneration and enlightenment of the colored race in these United States.

And second, from this comes the legitimate inference, suggested by the text, *i. e.* of union and co-operation, through all our ranks, for effective action, and for the noblest ends. Everywhere throughout the Union, wide and thorough organization of the people should be made, not for idle political logomachy ; but for industrial effort, for securing trades for youth, for joint stock companies, for manufacturing, for the production of the great staples of the land, and likewise for the higher purposes of life, *i. e.*, for mental and moral improvement, and raising the plane of social and domestic life among us.

In every possible way these needs and duties should be pressed upon their attention, by sermons, by lectures, by organized societies, by State and National Conventions ; the latter, *not* for political objects, but for social, industrial ends and attainments. I see nought in the future but that we shall be scattered, like chaff before the wind, before the organized labor of the land, the great power of capital, and the tremendous tide of emigration ; unless, as a people we fall back upon the might and mastery which come from the combination of forces and the principle of industrial co-operation. Most of your political agitation is but wind and vanity. *What this race needs in this country is POWER—the forces that may be felt.* And that comes from character ; and character is the product of religion, intelligence, virtue, family-order, superiority, wealth and the shew of industrial forces. THESE ARE FORCES WHICH

WE DO NOT POSSESS. *We are the only class, which as a class,* IN THIS COUNTRY, IS WANTING IN THESE GRAND ELEMENTS. The very first effort of the colored people should be to lay hold of them; and then, they will take such root in this American soil, that only the convulsive upheaving of the judgment day can throw them out! And therefore I close, as I began, with the admonitory tones of the text; God grant they may be heeded at least by you, who form this congregation, in your sacred work *here*; and in all your other relations:—
“They helped every one his neighbor, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smote the anvil saying, It is ready for the soldering; and he fastened it with nails, that it SHOULD NOT BE MOVED!”

